

REMARKS

Claims 14 to 17 are currently pending in the present application (since claims 18 to 33 were previously withdrawn as restricted).

In this regard, it is noted that the April 21, 2003 Action mistakenly referred to only claims 14 to 16 as being pending. That is, the April 21, 2003 Action mistakenly referred to claims 14 to 16 as being elected, when, in fact, claims 14 to 17 were elected in the March 24, 2003 response, according to the restriction requirement, which provided that Group I, Species A covered claims 14 to 17. Specifically, the original restriction requirement of the October 2, 2002 Action at pages 2 to 3 referred to Group I as including claims 14 to 26, and Species A as including claims 14 to 17, 27, and 28. Accordingly, claims 14 to 17 were elected in the March 24, 2003 response.

Further, the Office Action states that "a spring element" of claim 17 "can be found only in the non-elected embodiments of Species B (figures 4-5) and Species C (6-8)." (Office Action, p. 2). However, the Specification explicitly states that "spring element 61 can also be used in the embodiment described with respect to Figures 1 through 3." (Specification, p. 9, lines 12 to 13). Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 forms part of the originally elected embodiment of Species A.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 -- which was originally elected, remains currently pending in the present application.

In view of this response, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

With respect to paragraph seven (7) of the Office Action, claims 14 to 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as directed to non-statutory subject matter. The Office Action conclusorily asserts that "[c]laim 14 appears to encompass two statutory classes of invention. While the preamble of [sic] is directed to an apparatus, the body of the claim appears to be directed to a manufacturing process." (Office Action, p. 3).

While the rejections may not be agreed with, to facilitate matters, claim 14 has been rewritten herein without prejudice to specifically provide that "the crimped connection, formed by the valve housing, includes a material bulge having an average axial distance d with respect to the notch at a circumference of the connecting piece, the material bulge configured to be shifted inwards in a radial direction and all the way into the notch to generate an axial stress between the valve housing and the inserted connecting piece."

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 14, as presented, is directed to statutory subject matter, so that claim 14 is allowable. Claims 15 to 16 depend from claim 14, as presented, and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 14, as presented.

Withdrawal of the rejections of these claims is therefore respectfully requested.

With respect to paragraph nine (9) of the Office Action, claims 14 to 16 were rejected as indefinite under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

As explained above and while the rejections may not be agreed with, to facilitate matters, claim 14 has been rewritten to better clarify the claimed subject matter. It is respectfully submitted that the claims, as presented, comply with the definiteness requirement of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Approval and entry are respectfully requested, as is withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejections.

Claim 17, as presented, includes features like those of claim 14, as presented, and is therefore allowable for essentially the same reasons as claim 14.

Withdrawal of the rejections of the pending and considered claims is therefore respectfully requested.

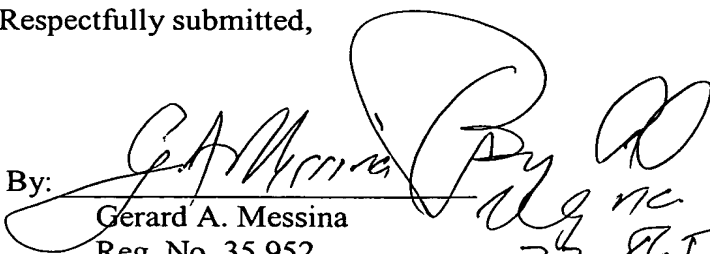
Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending and considered claims 14 to 17 are allowable. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejections (and any objections) be withdrawn, since all issues raised have been addressed and obviated. An early and favorable action on the merits is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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